

Statement on the Bombing of a Women's Health Clinic in Atlanta, Georgia January 16, 1997

Our thoughts and prayers are with the law enforcement officers and other citizens injured this morning and with their families.

The double bombing at a women's health clinic in Atlanta this morning was a vile and malevolent crime. Make no mistake: Anyone who brings violence against a woman trying to exercise her constitutional rights is committing an act of terror. It is always wrong. And it should be punished severely.

Nobody has a right to use violence in America to advance their own convictions over the rights of others. It is precisely because we take the constitutional rights and individual liberties of

all our people so seriously that I fought for and signed new legislation in 1994 to make it a Federal crime to interfere with a woman exercising her constitutional right to visit a women's health center.

Federal investigators from the FBI, ATF, the Marshals, and the U.S. Attorney are on the ground in Atlanta and working closely with local law enforcement. We will pursue this investigation aggressively and methodically. We will get to the bottom of this, and we will punish those responsible to the fullest extent the law provides.

Remarks on the World War II Memorial and on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former Senator Bob Dole January 17, 1997

Thank you very much, General Woerner, for your kind words and for your fine work. I thank you on behalf of all Americans for all the American Battle Monuments Commission does all around the world to ensure that our fallen heroes receive the honor they deserve.

Mr. Vice President, to the members of the Cabinet, Senator and Mrs. Dole and Robin, Majority Leader Lott and many Members of Congress who are here today, to the representatives of the veterans service organizations, the members of the American Battle Monuments Commission, my fellow Americans. Let me begin by thanking Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Governor Hugh Carey, Commissioner Wheeler, Dr. Williams, my good friend Jess Hay, and all the members of the American Battle Monuments Commission and the World War II Memorial Advisory Board for their efforts to create the first national memorial to all who served in World War II. I want to congratulate also Professor St. Florian and his team on their design. I have reviewed it, and it is very impressive.

The World War II Memorial will commemorate one of the great defining passages in our Nation's history. Fittingly, it will be flanked by

the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. For if the Revolutionary War marks the birth of our Republic and the Civil War its greatest trial, then surely America's triumph in World War II will forever signal our coming of age. Roused by the threat of tyranny and fascism, provoked by an infamous attack, millions of Americans fought under freedom's flag, carrying it to far-off places whose names still stir our souls.

At home, our Nation turned as one to the task of building a mighty arsenal for our democratic warriors. Out of the crucible of global conflict and total war, the greatest struggle humankind has ever known, America emerged as the world's most powerful force for peace and freedom and prosperity. With this memorial we pay lasting homage to the 16 million men and women who took up arms in that battle.

Some of the bravest among them were those who fought for freedom themselves were denied. Earlier this week, I had the chance to recognize the extraordinary courage of seven African-American soldiers with the Nation's highest military honor, an award that was richly deserved as long as it was overdue. But I say today that we owe them and all the veterans

of World War II a debt that can never be fully repaid. As I said, and had the honor to say in Normandy: When they were young, they saved the world.

This memorial also quite rightly remembers the heroics and hardships of those on the home-front. Many of the families who started the war with a star in the window ended it with sorrow in their hearts, their loved ones lost forever. But our Americans scrimped and saved, making do with 3 gallons of gas a week and two pairs of shoes a year. With the American Red Cross they worked to tend the wounded and send millions of care packages overseas. They ran the factories, manned in many cases by women, that churned out the planes, the tanks, the ships that enabled the allies to control the land, the air, and the sea.

In war, this generation of heroes summoned the collective resolve to defend our most cherished values, to defeat the most fearsome enemies. In peace, they came home and drew on that strength and unity to meet the challenges of a new era. Their leaders did not seek to withdraw from the world but to build alliances and institutions, to promote our prosperity, and to secure our victory in the long cold war. This memorial will stand as a lasting tribute to what Americans can achieve when they work together.

It is especially appropriate at this time that we also honor the remarkable service of one of our Nation's most distinguished World War II veterans who has spent the last 50 years of his life building America and a better world, Senator Bob Dole.

Fifty-one years ago, during a fierce fight in Italy's Po Valley, Second Lieutenant Bob Dole was going to the aid of a fallen comrade when a shell struck him down. He would bear the burden of that terrible injury from that day forward. His recuperation was long and uncertain. Yet Senator Dole turned adversity to advantage and pain to public service, embodying the motto of the State that he loved and went on to serve so well: *Ad astra per aspera*, to the stars through difficulties.

Son of the soil, citizen, soldier, and legislator, Bob Dole understands the American people, their struggles, their triumphs, and their dreams. Through five decades of public service that took him from county attorney to Senate majority

leader and the longest serving leader of his party in history, he never forgot his roots in Russell, Kansas. He has stood up for what he believed, championing the interests of his State's hard-working farmers, helping the disabled through leading the way to the Americans with Disabilities Act, extending the Voting Rights Act, playing a key role in the National Commission on Social Security Reform, and always, always supporting the leadership of our country: first, throughout that long twilight struggle of the cold war and, now in this new era, reasserting America's indispensable role for peace and freedom, security and prosperity.

In times of conflict and crisis, he has worked to keep America united and strong. In this city often known for taking itself too seriously, we are all better for his fine sense of humor. But our country is better for his courage, his determination, and his willingness to go the long course to lead America.

I am pleased to be able to recognize Bob Dole's record of achievement with the highest honor our Nation can bestow on a citizen, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Through it, we honor not just his individual achievement but his clear embodiment of the common values and beliefs that join us as a people, values and beliefs that he has spent his life advancing.

Senator Dole, a grateful nation presents this award with respect for the example you have set for Americans today and for Americans in generations yet to come.

I now ask the military aide to read the citation. Major, post the orders.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Fred F. Woerner, USA (ret.), Chairman, and Hugh Carey and F. Haydn Williams, Commissioners, American Battle Monuments Commission; Senator Dole's daughter, Robin; Pete Wheeler and Jess Hay, members, World War II Memorial Advisory Board; and architect Friedrich St. Florian, winner of the World War II Memorial design competition. Following the President's remarks, Maj. Charles Raderstorf, USMC, read the medal citation.

The President's Radio Address *January 18, 1997*

Good morning. Today I want to talk with you about the progress we have made in response to last year's disturbing rash of arsons and other destructive acts directed at houses of worship throughout our country. But before I do, I want to condemn another act of violent terror, the recent bombing of the women's health center in Atlanta. That, too, is wrong, and we also must stop it.

Now, in the aftermath of these terrible crimes against the houses of worship, many of us ask ourselves, why? Were these fires fueled by a sudden upsurge in racial and religious hostility? Were they set for personal gain or revenge? Or were they merely random acts of violence? Whatever the causes of the crimes, they offended every citizen who cherishes America's proud heritage of religious and ethnic diversity, every citizen who remembers that religious freedom, justice, and equality are the founding principles of our great democracy. As one who was raised in the church and who continues to be guided by the enduring lessons I learned there, I joined with all Americans of conscience in demanding swift action to combat these crimes, to help the churches rebuild, and to prevent any more fires.

Seven months ago, I established the National Church Arson Task Force to coordinate the efforts of more than 200 FBI and ATF agents deployed to work with local and State law enforcement agencies, churches, and citizens to catch and prosecute those responsible for these crimes. This week, the task force released its first interim report. The report shows that we have been remarkably successful in solving the crimes. Since January 1995, 143 suspects have been arrested in connection with 107 fires at churches and other houses of worship. This rate of arrest is double the general rate of arrest for arsons, and three-quarters of these arrests occurred during the 7 months following the formation of the task force. So far, 48 defendants have been convicted on Federal and State charges in connection with 43 fires.

This work has been supported by \$3 million in Justice Department grants to help local communities intensify their enforcement and surveillance efforts. In addition, Congress authorized

the Department of Housing to administer a \$10 million loan guarantee to assist with the rebuilding of churches. And the Federal Emergency Management Agency continues to work with communities to increase awareness and help build local arson prevention coalitions. This Federal effort must continue until all those responsible are brought to justice and no more fires burn.

But even more impressive than our Government effort has been the tremendous outpouring of assistance that has flowed from every corner of our country in response to these crimes. People have crossed lines of faith and race and region to link arms in a united effort to rebuild and protect our houses of worship. And by doing so, they have shown us that America is still a country that cares about its neighbors, a country that comes together in the face of common threats to defend the common ground of our values. I am reminded of what Joseph said in Genesis when he met up with the brothers who sold him into slavery: "You meant evil against me, but God meant it for good."

I saw this up close this past August when Hillary and I, along with the Vice President and Tipper Gore, picked up paintbrushes and hammers to help rebuild Salem Baptist Church in Fruitland, Tennessee. One of the earliest supporters of the rebuilding of this tiny black church was the congregation of a white church 3 miles down the road that also had suffered a suspicious fire.

On a national level, we saw groups like the National Council of Churches, the Anti-Defamation League, the Southern Christian Leadership Council, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the NAACP come together as one to tackle this problem. And we received strong bipartisan support from Congress for our work. The insurance industry, at the urging of the Vice President, also became a partner in the rebuilding effort.

These groups, and others of good will all over America, stepped forward to live out the lesson of the man whose birthday celebration this year coincides with my second Inauguration on Monday. Thirty-four years ago in his famous speech on The Mall in Washington, Dr. Martin Luther